GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:50
ANSWERED ON:02.12.2015
Broadband in Villages
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is satisfied with the quality of broadband services provided in the country;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor and the corrective action taken by the Government in this regard, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government has fixed any time-frame for linking of all villages of the country with broadband ensuring digital literacy along with access to computers and
providing 3G/wifi connectivity to villages;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the targets achieved in this regard, State-wise; and

(e) whether the Government plans to involve private sector in the National Optic Fiber Network (NOFN) project, if so, the details thereof and the action taken and progress made in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.50 FOR 2nd December, 2015 REGARDING "BROADBAND IN VILLAGES".

(a) &(b) (i) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has been monitoring the performance of service providers, against the quality of service benchmarks for the various parameters through compliance reports submitted by the service providers on quarterly basis.

(ii) For this purpose, TRAI has laid down the quality of service standards for broadband service through "Quality of Service of Broadband service Regulations, 2006 dated 6th October, 2006." For assessing the performance of service providers relating to wireless data services, TRAI has laid down the quality of service standards for wireless data services through "The Standards of quality of service for wireless data services regulations, 2012."

(iii) As per the performance monitoring report for the quarter ending June, 2015 for Broadband services, all the service providers are generally meeting the benchmarks related to the parameters for its Broadband services.

(iv) Non Compliance with the benchmarks is mainly observed in respect of the parameters (1) "Response time to the customer for assistance %age of calls answered by the operators (voice to voice) within 90 seconds" in 7 service areas of Bharti Airtel Ltd; 1 service area of Hathway; M/s Atria & TCL on All India basis.

(v) The reasons for non-compliance with the benchmarks are unexpected increase in volume of traffic, Right-of-Way issues, frequent power failures, fibre and cable cuts, infrastructural issues at customer premise like adherence to the terms and conditions by societies and building related to cabling, wiring and installation etc.

(vi) As regards, wireless data services, as per the performance monitoring report for the quarter ending June 2015, all the service providers are meeting the benchmarks for all the quality of service parameters.

(vii) Wherever the Quality of Service benchmarks are not met the explanation of the service providers is called for and after considering the response of the service provider financial disincentive are imposed. TRAI has now made the financial disincentives more stringent in cases of continuous non-compliance with the benchmark.

(viii) For ensuring quality of service, TRAI is closely monitoring the performance of service providers against the quality of service benchmarks. TRAI has been pursuing with service providers for improving Quality of Service and in this regard regular interactions are held with the service providers. TRAI has also engaged independent agencies for auditing and assessing the quality of service and surveys are being done regularly through independent agencies to assess the customer perception of service. The results of the audit and assessment of quality of service and surveys are published for the information of stakeholders, which also force the service providers to improve the quality of service. For addressing Call drop issues which have been a matter of concern in the recent times, TRAI has been closely monitoring the action plan of the service providers in this regard and regular interactions are held with service providers for addressing network problems.

(c) to(e) (i) National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project was planned by the Government in the year 2011 to connect all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 Lakh) in the country through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) utilizing existing fibers of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) viz. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) and RailTel and laying incremental fiber wherever necessary to bridge the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Blocks for providing broadband connectivity. Under this project, at least 100 Mbps bandwidth was to be provided in all the estimated 2,50,000 GPs for utilization by all categories of service providers on non-discriminatory basis including Internet Service Providers. Project was to be executed in the phases i.e. Phase-I 1,00,000 GPs by 31.03.2015, Phase-II another 1,00,000 GPs by 31.03.2016 and Phase-III remaining 50,000 GPs by 31.12.2016.

(ii) State-wise status of NOFN project as on 22.11.2015, is given in the Statement at Annexure-I.

(iii) In order to review the strategy and approach towards speedy implementation of National Optical Fibre Network, Government of India constituted a Committee on 14th January, 2015. The Committee submitted its report on 31st March, 2015. The Committee, inter-alia, recommended that the project be renamed as BharatNet to reflect the national aspiration to establish a highly scalable network infrastructure accessible on a non-discriminatory basis to realize the vision of Digital India, in partnership with the States and the private sector.

(iv) One of the mandates of this Committee was to come up with solutions that could ensure project completion by December 2016. Committee gave considerable thought to this issue and was of the opinion that adherence to the timeline of December, 2016, either in the existing framework or the revised framework suggested by the Committee, may not be feasible. The Committee in its report, inter-alia, suggested a revised timeline upto December 2017.

(v) The Committee has also recommended that Wi-Fi infrastructure may be provided by Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL)/State Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) through public investment and the Wi-Fi services delivery could be through any licensed service providers. Wi-Fi for each resident of the GP should be provided by the identified Wi-Fi services Provider for which wholesale bandwidth may be made available by BBNL/State SPV.

(vi) The Committee has recommended two other alternative models for project management and implementation in comparison to the existing CPSU driven model namely, the State Government −led model and Private Sector-led model.

(vii) Report of the Committee is under examination in the Department of Telecommunications.